

ECUADOR - M/Y SAMBA: 8 DAY SOUTHEAST



INTRODUCTION

A trip to the Galapagos Islands is the journey of a lifetime. Located 1,000 km from the Ecuadorian mainland, the archipelago consists of 13 major islands, 5 of which are inhabited. Travel aboard the beautiful Samba for an amazing journey amidst playful sea lions, elegant albatrosses, fiery red Sally Lightfoot crabs, sneaky frigatebirds and other intriguing wildlife. Cruise between the southeastern islands visiting Santa Cruz, Floreana, Espanola, San Cristobal, Santa Fe, South Plaza, Bartolome and Rabida.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Santa Cruz Island

On arrival at Baltra Airport all visitors pay their entrance fee to the Galapagos National Park and get their hand luggage checked by the quarantine system. You will then be met by the Samba's naturalist guide, who will assist you with your luggage collection and escort you on your first visit of your Galapagos adventure. This is to Rancho "El Manzanillo" located in the Highlands of Santa Cruz Island, where you will have a snack. After this you have the opportunity to see the Galapagos tortoise in the wild. Later in the day you will be welcomed on board the Samba.



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DAY 2: Floreana Island

Following a four-hour navigation from Puerto Ayora we will make a wet landing on a volcanic olivine beach. Punta Cormorant lays on the northern shore of Floreana and is home to greater flamingos and sea turtles. On one side, the point is partially flooded with a brackish lagoon where flamingos nest and feed. Whimbrels, herons and stilts are other common shore and migratory birds of the wetlands. On the other side sea turtles use every corner of a white sand beach to lay their eggs. You often see stingrays and reef sharks from the shore and if you are lucky turtles basking in the sun. Around mid-morning we sail for 25 minutes before embarking on a dinghy ride and to snorkel at Champion Islet. This small piece of land is one of two places where the Floreana mockingbird survives after its extinction on the main island. While trying to find the rare bird from our dinghies, we will enjoy a beautiful landscape full of picturesque cacti and terracotta rock formations. Soon sea lions will invite us to enjoy the water. The snorkelling around the island is extraordinary, amongst plenty of fish, rays, sharks and the playfulness of the Galapagos sea lions. Adventure, survival, mystery and murder are the main ingredients for our next stop. Post Office Bay has left a legacy of pirates, whalers, scientific expeditions and intense stories of slaying and constant ambiguity. After a wet landing we walk a very short distance to be part of the most important Galapagos tradition. Later we will kayak or ride in dinghies to the west. We will go through a small set of islets with a sea lion colony, boobies and mangroves. Finally, following our ride we will land at the Baroness lookout. On top of this eroded spatter cone we will embrace the vivid obscurity of the human history of "Las Encantadas".



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DAY 3: Espanola Island

Espanola or Hood is the oldest Galapagos Island. When landing on its western tip, on Punta Suárez, it is difficult to digest the beauty and the overwhelming amount of life on the island. It takes a few minutes to understand that you are not dreaming and that the marine iguanas are really covered with fiery colours, sea lions leisurely wander around you, and blue-footed boobies and Sally Lightfoot crabs coat the rocks with their intense grace. The long walk leads us through the finest illustration of an ancient seabird colony. The endless cliff shaped by strong wave action and the force of the wind is the home of the only tropical albatross on Earth. This mythical elegant glider shares the precipice with many others seabirds such as tropicbirds, the swallow-tailed gull and the Nazca booby. Depending on weather conditions, either at the end of the morning or early in the afternoon, we will snorkel or kayak around Gardner Island. Its calm waters and attractive landscape give you a great experience above and below water. Located on the north coast of Española, Gardner Bay has a tranquil white sand beach. The fine grains of sand make perfect terrain for a soft walk and place to relax in the afternoon. You won't be alone though as sea lions and Hood mockingbirds will keep you company.



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DAY 4: San Cristobal Island

Today you will wake up to the barking of Galapagos sea lions, animals after which Isla Lobos was named. After a dry landing on Isla Lobos, we walk over very rocky terrain to see the nesting areas of frigatebirds on this small flat Island. These fascinating birds with their magenta and green iridescent feathers can be seen decorating the saltbushes. The island is also the nesting ground of blue-footed boobies. Don't miss the chance of swimming with sea lions as few sea creatures are as playful as these marine mammals. Before lunch we navigate alongside a dramatic tuff cone formation, Kicker Rock. The eroded structure has vertical walls that rise over 450 feet and there are a great number of seabirds nesting and resting on it. We will circumnavigate the rock to admire its magnitude, before jumping in the water to swim with Galapagos sharks, sea turtles, and eagle rays and around drop offs full of colourful fish and invertebrates. On Punta Pitt we make a wet landing late in the afternoon to climb a tuff cone and enjoy the sunset. This point is closest to mainland South America. Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, frigatebirds and storm petrels nest in the area. The ochre coloured beach is perfect for a relaxing plunge after the walk.



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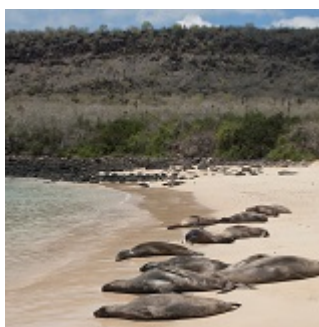
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DAY 5: Santa Fe & Plazas

The bay looks as if an artist painted it. Barrington Bay is one of the most picturesque inlets of all visitor sites of the Galapagos. The white sand on the seabed reflects the light to turn the calm waters turquoise. A small forest of gigantic prickly pear cactus grows on a peninsula that keeps the bay sheltered. These are all conditions that are suitable for a large sea lion colony. Santa Fe is an ancient extinct volcano and it has been isolated from other islands long enough to have an endemic land dragon. Paler in colour than its relatives, the Barrington terrestrial iguana has a primitive morphology. Galapagos hawks, mockingbirds, Darwin's finches and endemic rice rats are all company to this yellowish monster. The snorkelling here won't disappoint you. A two-hour navigation north takes us to South Plaza. The dry landing takes us to a brilliant combination of life and colours. Land iguanas wander through bright red carpet weed, swallow-tailed gulls nest around the overhang tops and red-billed tropicbirds and shearwaters fly in dancing displays. Be careful of the frigatebirds, the pirates of the sky; they will strike if you drop your guard. This is one of the best spots in the archipelago to see land iguanas and swallow-tailed gulls, both indigenous to the Galapagos. There are iguana nests scattered all over the hill. The sheer cliffs of the southern shore are a perfect bird habitat, making it an unparalleled bird observatory especially for swallow-tailed gulls, Audubon shearwaters, and red-billed tropicbirds. If we have enough time and good weather we will swim or snorkel in Punta Carrion. A great way to end an active day!



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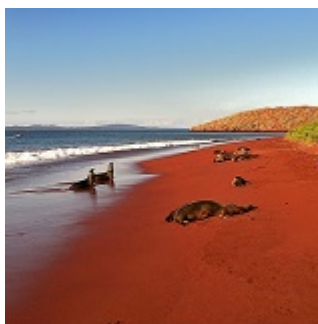
DAY 6: Chinese Hat & Bartolome

The genesis of the islands is easy to acknowledge at Chinese Hat. The coiled shiny structures of the pahoe-hoe lava appear as if they were formed yesterday. Lava tubes run like petrified rivers and white sand from eroded coral surrounds the black rock. Scenic falls short to describe this spot. Located on the southeast shores of James, this island is a symmetrical cinder cone. The contrast of colours and shapes of the basalt, rust and shine of its surface resembles that of Mars. This is also a great place to snorkel. Bartolome Island offers an explosive volcanic landscape. Get ready to climb over 270 feet to admire the dramatic spatter cones and the view of Pinnacle Rock, one of the classic sights of the Galapagos. Later, we take a walk on magical golden beaches where sea turtles nest (December to March). Don't forget to make time to swim near penguins, sharks and lava tubes.



DAY 7: James Bay & Rabida

James Bay, also known as Puerto Egas, has magical shorelines that combine tuff cones, lava flows and organic sand. A rocky coast with a very gentle slope is used by a great number of shore birds and reptiles. Oystercatchers, whimbrels, sanderlings, turnstones, tattlers and other waders are found here along with marine iguanas and bright painted crabs that feed by the rich littoral zone. Large lava tunnels, that are partially collapsed, are the houses of Galapagos fur sea lions. The snorkelling here can be one of the best in the archipelago in amongst sea turtles feeding, parrot fishes, damsel fishes, white tipped reef sharks and much more... The Galapagos Islands offers a diversity of geological formations without boundaries. The island of Rábida has lavas rich in iron and after millions of years of exposure to air they have turned red. The rusted volcanic material has eroded to form a beautiful crimson sand beach, lovely for a walk. The protected shore provides excellent conditions for a Galapagos sea lion nursery and brown pelicans use the nearby saltbushes as a resting and nesting area. Hawks and mockingbirds are common visitors of the lowlands. Snorkelling off the beach here can be very exciting as sharks, rays and many colourful fish are often visible.



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DAY 8: North Seymour / Departure day

The visit to North Seymour is the best way of saying goodbye to the Galapagos. Following a dry landing at sunrise we will walk amongst the largest blue-footed booby colony of the islands. During the breeding season you will enjoy their dancing and singing to find a mate. Not far from the dancers there are great and magnificent frigatebirds nesting. The males inflate their pouches to attract the ladies that fly above them. Swallow-tailed gulls and tropicbirds decorate the large basaltic walls of the island. We return to the Samba for breakfast on board at 8:00 as we have to be ready to check out at 9:00. We recommend that you do most of your packing the previous night so that you can enjoy the early morning visit followed by a relaxed breakfast. After checking out you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to mainland Ecuador.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard cabin
Inclusions	Airport transfers in Galapagos; Lodging in Twin/Matrimonial cabin as confirmed All meals during your stay on board M/S Samba Snorkel equipment All excursions lead by an English speaking naturalist Guide
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.

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2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.

3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.

4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.

5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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